

## Castro foes, with CIA aid, said to bring virus to Cuba

New York (Reuter). — An anti-Castro group, working with at least the tacit backing of United States Central Intelligence Agency, introduced an African swine fever virus into Cuba in 1971, *Newsday*, the Long Island newspaper, said yesterday.

Six weeks later, an outbreak of the disease caused the slaughter of 500,000 pigs to prevent an animal epidemic, the newspaper said.

*Newsday* quoted a U.S. intelligence source as saying he was given the virus in a sealed, unmarked container at a U.S. Army base and Central Intelligence Agency training ground in the Panama Canal zone with instructions to turn it over to the anti-Castro group.

An unidentified Cuban exile has said, according to the newspaper, that the container was eventually taken to Cuba and given to members of an anti-Castro group on the southern coast near the U.S. Navy base at Guantanamo Bay.

African swine fever is a highly contagious viral disease that infects only pigs and, unlike swine flu, cannot be transmitted to humans, doctors said.

*Newsday* said that when the virus turned up in Cuba in 1971, medical experts assumed it had entered the country either in rubbish from a commercial airline or in sausages brought in by merchant seamen.

A Central Intelligence Agency spokesman in Washington had no comment on the report.